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Nicola Dawson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Dawson

### **Short inspection of Wincheap Foundation Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 October 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2012.

### **This school continues to be good.**

With a remarkably stable and committed staff team, the smooth transition between the changing senior leadership, including your promotion to headteacher, has ensured that this continues to be a good school. The support of both the local authority and an experienced and stable governing body has contributed to the sense of continuity. You have formed a close and effective partnership with the deputy headteacher. Together, you have an honest and accurate view of the school's effectiveness and a clear vision and ambition for where you want the school to be.

The exceptionally rich and vibrant environment throughout the school reflects a varied and engaging curriculum. Learning across a range of subjects is linked logically together, and made purposeful and engaging for pupils who are proud of and keen to share their achievements. For example: pupils confidently spoke words and phrases that they have learned in Spanish; I heard Year 6 pupils singing with gusto; pupils explained the literary inspiration behind their art 'dots'; and most-able pupils explained the finer points of tennis techniques that they had learned in physical education. However, having correctly identified that the quality of pupils' work is not consistently of the highest quality, you have rightly begun to take action to address this, focusing on improving pupils' handwriting initially. This attention to detail is already having a positive impact on the fluency of pupils' written work and their quality of presentation.

Despite the strong and varied education that the school offers, too many pupils still

do not attend as regularly as they should. Your current drive, 'Project 95', has raised expectations of what good attendance is, informing parents of how many 'learning hours' pupils that are regularly absent have missed. Currently, attendance is running much higher than in the previous year, but you recognise that this must be sustained.

Effective action by leaders across the school has ensured that recommendations from the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed. One of these focused on the speech and language provision for pupils who have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Leaders have raised expectations of what these pupils can achieve from their particular starting points. They track each pupil's progress carefully and intervene where there are any concerns, including through seeking additional assessments and advice from other professionals. There is a drive and determination to maximise opportunities for pupils to be included in mainstream lessons wherever it is appropriate, based on their particular needs. I observed pupils from the specialist provision fully and successfully involved in mainstream lessons.

Leaders were also asked to improve the reading skills of less-able pupils, including through teaching phonics more systematically. You have changed the phonics scheme that teachers follow and made sure that they reinforce pupils' learning through other activities. Although in previous years the proportion meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has remained below the national average, by Year 2 this has risen markedly. Nonetheless, you are determined that pupils should learn to read competently as young as possible, whatever their starting point, so you continue to focus sharply on this priority. The most recent Year 1 results showed a considerable rise, especially for disadvantaged pupils. During lessons and when hearing pupils read, I observed lower-ability pupils tackling unfamiliar texts with confidence.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding procedures are robust and the welfare of pupils is given a high priority. The pastoral work of the school was particularly praised by pupils, parents and governors. Checks on staff are thorough, systematic and all recorded carefully on the single central register. Regular training for leaders and staff keeps them abreast of latest guidance and requirements. Working with governors, you have invested in improving site security through lockable gates, better fencing and coded doors.

It is clear that there is no complacency, for example, making sure that the school's strict procedures for reporting concerns are followed by all staff. Record-keeping is thorough and well organised. Records that I sampled indicated that action is swift and well recorded, together with the outcomes of the action taken. Your pastoral manager and team told me how they have built close relationships with social services over a number of years. The pastoral team work closely with others to protect potentially vulnerable pupils.

Pupils and parents are overwhelmingly positive about how the school cares for pupils and keeps them safe. Describing the 'genuine care and concern about each individual' was how one parent expressed this, typical of the sentiment of many. Pupils I spoke to said that they feel safe. They said that they are confident to approach adults who will listen to them and sort out any problems. Pupils and parents also report that bullying is rare and well dealt with should it occur.

## **Inspection findings**

- When visiting classrooms, both you and your deputy swiftly and accurately identified a considerable number of pertinent strengths as well as relevant areas for development. You use your evaluations well to identify areas to focus your attention.
- Children settle quickly into early years classes. It was clear from our short visit to their physical education session that routines are already well established. All children were joining in well and responding very quickly to adults' instructions and questions.
- Pupils are extremely positive about reading. They believe that it is highly valued in the school. The obvious use of high-quality texts as an inspiration in lessons and throughout the environment indicates that they are right. Most-able pupils read challenging texts and express thoughtful insights about their favourite authors.
- Provisional results for 2016 show that Year 6 leavers made above-average progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Your own assessment information shows that across the school, current pupils are mostly working at least in line with age-related expectations in reading and mathematics, with writing lagging slightly behind but improving.
- Teachers extend younger pupils' vocabulary effectively, so that they start to use words such as 'mean', 'creepy', 'fancy' or 'petite' to describe their characters. In Year 2, I observed the teaching assistant encouraging pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to say sentences aloud first, supporting them to write more accurately. Meanwhile, improvements in the stamina of the most able pupils was already evident in their work so far this year, beginning to introduce adverbs to their writing too.
- Effective teaching in the speech and language provision means that these pupils make good progress, working on tasks that meet their individual needs well. Due to the low starting points of some pupils, this is not always fully reflected in published data. Teaching assistants are clear about the next steps that pupils need to take to make progress. I observed adults skilfully managing the emotional and social needs of pupils to break down potential barriers to learning. During observations in both classes, pupils showed confidence and were calm, focused and purposefully engaged.
- Leaders' and governors' spending of pupil premium funding to provide additional individual and small group tuition has been very effective. The difference between the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally diminished considerably from 2013, disappearing altogether in 2015.

- Disadvantaged pupils have very positive attitudes to learning which supports their good progress. For example, lower-ability disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 make good attempts to write complex sentences accurately, using carefully selected vocabulary. Disadvantaged pupils that I spoke to feel that their work is improving and could explain how.
- Most-able pupils make good progress. They feel well challenged, and have positive attitudes about how they learn from mistakes, for example in mathematics. Pupils spoke of their aspirations for the future and how the school could set them on the right path to achieve their ambitions. They can recall the detail of things that they have learned well. Most-able disadvantaged pupils make good progress relative to their higher starting points.
- Pupils behave well and engage enthusiastically across a range of subjects. Exclusions fell dramatically in the previous academic year. You attribute this to effective teaching, but also to the longer-term impact of revisiting staff training in positive behaviour management strategies to promote pupils' strong behaviour for learning.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about what the school has to offer. Many praised the richness of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities as well as the caring and compassionate nature of school staff. As one parent summed it up: '...staff create a very positive atmosphere and learning environment for children to progress both educationally and emotionally.'

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportions of pupils that are frequently absent and the overall attendance of different groups of pupils are brought at least in line with national figures
- pupils' progress is strong and sustained across subjects and year groups
- expectations of pupils are consistently high, including of most-able pupils, to secure the best possible outcomes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

For most of the inspection, I worked alongside you and your deputy. One of you accompanied me during all of my visits to mainstream lessons. Your assistant headteacher in charge of the specialist speech and language provision joined me for

observations there. In total, I observed parts of 12 lessons across all key stages. During my visits to classrooms, I talked to pupils about their learning, looked at their work and heard them read. I had further discussions outside of lessons with two groups of pupils. I held meetings with the chair of the governing body, a further three governors and a representative of the local authority. I spoke informally with a parent at their request and read a letter from a parent sent for my attention. I took account of 66 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and considered all of the written comments that were added to these alongside other inspection evidence. I also analysed 34 staff questionnaire returns and 58 responses from pupils. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records, including some relating to safeguarding and your own summary of the school's effectiveness. Through these activities, I focused particularly on disadvantaged pupils, the most able, the consistency in the quality of education between subjects, the speech and language provision and safeguarding.